

often a low priority assigned to interstate placement of foster and adoptive children. It is the latter that is really the problem.

This bill creates meaningful incentives for States to address these barriers, and I urge my colleagues to support this initiative. It is meaningful legislation. This is not symbolic. It has some real power to change things. But it is more than that. By passing this bill, we recognize the heroic efforts of countless Americans across this country, foster parents and the caseworkers who deal with them and the many others who strive to help kids who are in need.

By passing this legislation, we also rightly honor the leadership in fighting for vulnerable children by Mr. TOM DELAY. He has made a difference, and it is no surprise that he keeps fighting to protect and defend children. All too often, we are the light of hope for abused and neglected children. Today, let us curse the darkness by passing this bill.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this act ought to probably be entitled the Get Foster Children Out of the System Into a Safe Home As Soon As Possible Act, as it has real consequences for our foster children.

There have been so often foster children, even in the best system, that are lost in that system. These delays can be as, TOM DELAY has told you, just so harmful for them. Moving them forward is the right thing to do, and it is a possible thing to do.

Each week on TV, we watch on "Home Makeover" a set of people come together and build a complete home for a family in one week. Why can't we find a good, safe loving home for children in 2 months? It is important we do this.

Our family has been through two home studies in our adoption, and I know what a difference how soon and how accurate and how important these home studies can be done. We ought not let a State line get in the way of helping these children.

I can tell you that TOM DELAY has been such an advocate and champion for children. When you see the work of Rio Bend, what he and his wife are doing, it is just remarkable. I strongly support this bill.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have no more speakers. I would just like to reiterate my thanks to all the people. I would like to mention Sean McCluskie, who has been my staff member on the Subcommittee for Human Resources for over 7 years and, unfortunately, is leaving us for greener pastures.

I want to thank all of the staff on both sides of the aisle who worked so hard on these bills that come before

our subcommittee which get little attention outside of the professionals in the social work field.

Again, I thank our Chair and thank Mr. DELAY and the people who have worked so well together to make this important step to improve the lives of foster and perhaps adoptive children.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation we are considering today is an important step that will ensure timely and safe homes for children. This bill would help speed up the interstate adoption process so that children could be placed in permanent, loving homes more quickly.

I thank my colleagues across the aisle, the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK) and others, for their work on this bipartisan legislation, and I again wish to thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas, Mr. DELAY, for his tireless work to improve the lives of abused and neglected children.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5403, the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation, which is sponsored by Mr. DELAY.

There are approximately 518,000 children currently in foster care. The legislation before us today is an important first step in our efforts to improve the structure that exists to find a family for these children in order to prevent them from needlessly lingering in foster care.

Specifically, H.R. 5403 would encourage states to expedite the safe placement of foster and adoptive children into homes across state lines. The data suggest that it takes 2 years on average for foster or adoptive children to be placed in homes across state lines. That is longer than the average time frame for placing children in homes within the same states. Under this legislation, states would be required to establish procedures to ensure interstate placements occur within 60 days.

The legislation also would authorize incentive payments to states that place children in safe homes within 30 days. Since we first began providing incentive payments to promote adoption in 1997, the number of adoptions of children from foster care has almost doubled. We expect this new incentive program will help expedite the safe placement of children lingering in foster care, especially when relatives or others have expressed an interest in providing a loving home.

Almost 20,000 children age out of foster care every year at age 18 without the benefit of a family to call their own. This legislation will improve that situation and ensure that more children are raised in loving families instead of waiting needlessly in temporary homes. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my strong support for legislation the House is considering today, H.R. 5403, the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act, introduced by Rep. TOM DELAY (R-TX).

First, I would like to commend Mr. DELAY for his work on behalf of foster children, and in

the development of this bill. As the sponsor of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, I have had the privilege of working with Mr. DELAY to improve the lives of children in foster care, and promote the adoption of children into safe and loving families.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 5403, the bill before us today further expedites the safe placement of foster care children. Under current rules, children wait a year or more for states to approve placements across state lines. Children deserve better treatment, and I am glad that H.R. 5403 places a 60 day deadline on the approval of placements across state lines. Importantly, the bill also seeks to keep families together by providing incentive payments for the placement of children with extended family members.

Again, I want to applaud Mr. DELAY for his tireless advocacy on behalf of foster children, and for his work on H.R. 5403. I am confident this legislation will improve the lives foster children everywhere.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5403.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 832, by the yeas and nays;

Adopting House Resolution 832, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5427, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 832 on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 190, not voting 18, as follows: